



Dartmouth College

Animal Care and Use Program

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

IACUC Policies and Procedures

Title: Toe Clipping

Purpose: Toe Clipping is a method of identification of small rodents that involves a numerical scheme in which the first bone of certain toes is removed with a sharp instrument. It should be used only when no other individual identification method is feasible (tattooing, ear tags, or subcutaneous implantation of a transponder identification chip). Under certain circumstances the technique of toe clipping for the purpose of identification may be necessary.

Policy: Toe clipping for marking an animal is considered as a potentially painful procedure, which should be discouraged and only done with the approval of the IACUC.

If approved by the IACUC, the following restrictions apply:

- Toe Clipping should be performed only on neonate rodents (less than 6 days of age) using aseptic technique and using coagulants or other therapy as necessary.
- No more than one toe per foot should be clipped.

Toe Clipping should not be considered a suitable identifying technique for animals used in some behavioral studies as it may reduce grip strength.